The Amalgamation of Javanese Abangan, Islam, Taoism and Buddhism in the Sam Po Kong Shrine

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This paper describes a religious phenomenon at the Sam Po Kong temple in Semarang. I argue that the syncretism there is the result of cultural and religious interconnections between Javanese abangan*, Islam, Taoism, and Buddhism. The beginning of this paper will depict the historical explorations of Cheng Ho, the principal figure in this Sam Po Kong shrine. The next part describes several instances of Javanese* abangan*, Islamic, Taoist, and Buddhist influences in this pantheon. The remainder of this paper will argue that the notion of* Oneness of God *believed by Sam Po Kong members is the result of political influences in Indonesia.*

Introduction

In history all over the world, religions have had to enter syncretism with local cultures so that they could easily be accepted by local societies. In Indonesia, particularly in Java, such amalgamation has proven effective in disseminating Islamic precepts. Yet, something else emerged from this fusion of Islam, Hinduism, and Javanese culture, termed *abangan*, which is incompatible with real Islamic tenets regarding ethical monotheism.[1] Despite some criticism of *abangan*, many Javanese still practice it due to their pride of Javanese culture and the endeavor to perpetuate their ancestors' beliefs.

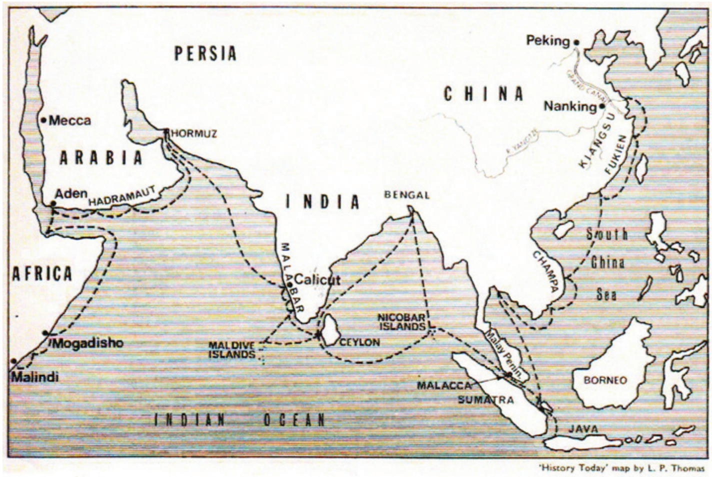
In the Sam Po Kong (三保洞) temple in Semarang, Central Java, the community has developed another kind of *bricolage*[2]. Influences from Islam and Javanese *abangan*, together with Taoism and Buddhism as the religions imported from China, mingle and produce interesting religious rituals which can not be found elsewhere in the world. Religion[3] in Indonesia imposed by the state has contributed to the formation of a certain belief among the Sam Po Kong temple's followers. For them, god[4] is *one* but we can pray to him through a "special transcendent medium", such as Cheng Ho and Mbah Juru Mudi (as extraordinary people) or Dewa Bumi, the god of Earth, as a local deity.

Therefore, by investigating syncretistic religious phenomena at the Sam Po Kong temple, I will apply Durkheim's theory of *collective consciousness* to classify the Sam Po Kong shrine's community into three groups. I will also apply Geertz's *symbolic anthropology* (specifically, the notion of a set of symbols that create mood, motivations, and worldviews) to the Sam Po Kong temple's community. I will also take into account the political background of Indonesia, as it played a significant role in shaping religious hybridity in this pantheon.

Admiral Cheng Ho, the Noble-Hearted Wanderer from the East

As mentioned by Nora C. Buckley[5], Admiral Cheng Ho 鄭和 (born Ma He 馬和) was of Muslim Arab–Mongol heritage. In 1381, he was sent to Ming dynasty's royal palaces, along with some young boys, to protect the king's mistresses. Therefore, he had to be castrated. He was also trained in a special school and military base to be a reserve soldier in the battlefield. He received his Chinese name Cheng Ho through his courage and devotion. He also bears the Buddhist name Sam Po, "three jewels". The word "Kong" – which is only used by Chinese people in Semarang – means "an ancestor which is respected".[6]

In the next twenty years, he succeeded in leading seven imperial maritime missions to thirty-seven countries on the Indochinese coast, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the east coast of Africa with more than 1,500 sophisticated ships and 28,000 soldiers and sea experts.[7]



Map of Cheng Ho's routes (taken from Nora C. Buckley: *The extraordinary voyages of Admiral Cheng Ho*)

However, according to historical accounts inscribed on sculptures in the Sam Po Kong temple, Cheng Ho's wisdom, leadership, and tolerance distinguish him from other sea adventurers, in particular Europeans such as Columbus and Vasco da Gama. Instead of using coercive force, he preferred peaceful ways and even assisted some countries in solving internal and regional conflicts. In 1409, he mediated the peaceful agreement between Malaka (now Malaysia) and Siam (now Thailand). In Malaysia, he even protected Princess Han Li Bao (漢麗寶), the future wife of Sultan Mansyur Syah. During a journey to "Old Harbor", or Ba Lin Bang (now Palembang, the capital city of South Sumatra), he defeated Chen Zuyi (陳祖義), a famous pirate, and his 5,000 men.[8] In Indonesia, Cheng Ho was the main negotiator of the civil war resolution between Zainal Abidin and Iskandar (Su Gan La).[9]

Cheng Ho's significant contributions in these countries resulted in friendship and cooperation between the Chinese emperor and kings of the territories he visited. By the same token, he and his sailors could mingle easily with the local inhabitants. His diplomatic position was also advocated by the presence of Shen-Hui, a Buddhist monk, and Hasan, the Imam of the Ching Chin mosque in Siam during his maritime explorations.[10] Therefore, various rulers gave him ample presents, from trading goods to exotic plants and animals.[11]

Cheng Ho's fame and reputation of greatness generated admiration among Chinese locals in Indonesia and Siam. As mentioned by Kong Yuanzhi[12], of the many Buddhist temples in Siam, there are two Sam Po Kong temples. The first one used to be called the Panancheng temple, and was constructed in 1324. The local community renamed the Panancheng temple to Sam Po Kong temple because they greatly admired Cheng Ho and his men for his trading missions to Ayuthaya in 1407 and 1409. Additionally, *Ming Shi* (明史, the book about the history of the Ming dynasty) asserts that in the Sam Po Kong temple in Siam, there is a statue of Cheng Ho which is worshipped by Siamese Chinese people.

A Glance of the Sam Po Kong Temple

The Sam Po Kong temple is a well-known shrine and tourist site in Semarang, known not only for its wonderful architecture, but also for the name of the temple itself – Sam Po Kong or Cheng Ho – that is associated with a highly respected Chinese person for both the (non-Muslim) Chinese and the (Muslim) Javanese. His charismatic figure has become the unifier for these two distinct ethnic groups that have been coexisting for years in Semarang. Even Javanese who do not belong to those groups come



The gate of the Sam Po Kong Temple (photo by author)

to this shrine for mystical worship in order to receive blessings from Mbah Juru Mudi.[13]

In the past, this temple was a mosque built by Chinese Muslims in Semarang. Cheng Ho visited this mosque in 1413. But, it was converted to the Sam Po Kong temple when Jin Bun came to Semarang in 1474. It remained a religious place for non-Muslim Chinese ever since, although Jin Bun was a Muslim who became the Sultan of Demak.[14] His sympathetic nature was appreciated by non-Muslim Chinese living in Semarang.[15]

Today, it is one of the best-known and largest Chinese shrines in Indonesia. In almost the entire area of this vast temple, there are sculptures of ships and dragons. The ships show Sam Po Kong's role as a Chinese leader and conqueror. The dragons are typical Chinese icons which embody the force that rule this world.[16] Four statues of guardian generals in the middle of Sam Po Kong temple "protect" it. Some of them resemble Chinese men, whereas the others look like Chinese heavenly beings (with a long beard, a unique face, and special clothing).

The shrine consists of three main temple buildings. Even though all three are located in one area, the Sam Po Kong temple, the two sub-temples are not dedicated to Cheng Ho. The middle temple serves as a holy place for the followers of Mbah Juru Mudi, while the last temple functions as a pantheon for those worshipping Dewa Bumi (the god of Earth). All of these temples have a three-level roof, which looks like a lotus petal.[17] Using Durkheim's theory, the establishment of the other two shrines had the objective of creating a space for symbols and rituals enabling people to express profound emotions of community attachment – a vehicle for social feelings.[18] Thus, within the area of the Sam Po Kong temple, we can observe the very interesting situation of three different religious groups worshipping people or supernatural entities of transcendence.

Clifford Geertz's definition of "religion", applicable to the Sam Po Kong temple, is as follows:



The typical three-level roof, resembling a lotus petal (photo by author)

> Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.[19]

In the three shrines, we will find many symbols whose purpose is "to carry and to convey to people an idea", meaning to be powerful and able to bestow "inner peace and joy" for the temples' worshippers. Next, these positive innate feelings have to do with so-called "ultimate explanations of the world". The combination of symbols, internal sentiments, and worldviews will characterize each ritual in a special way.[20]

In the following, I will analyze the syncretism in each of the three sub-temples of the Sam Po Kong shrine.

What is the Function of the First Temple?

The first temple is dedicated to the Admiral Cheng Ho or Sam Po Kong. However, we will not encounter Cheng Ho's remains in this place. There is only a "holy cave of Sam Po Kong" (*gua suci Sam Po Kong*), for him to use his supernatural powers there. Followers of the first temple believe that he was able to go to China only by entering a well located in the cave. An-

other version of the story affirms that the well operates as a place of ablution.[21]



The Holy Cave of Cheng Ho (photo by author)

Worshipping a well is one evidence of syncretism between Javanese mystical beliefs (*abangan*) and Islam. For Javanese Muslims, a well is considered sacred because it not only functions as an important water supplier for society, but also symbolizes purity since Muslim saints utilized it for ablution. Hence, in the past, Prophet Mohammed's friends (Ali and Utsman), Muslim clergy, and saints built wells in devoutness to Islam. While the Muslim Javanese use wells as part of Islamic precepts, local *abangan* followers pay homage to the oldest well in a village by giving offerings and performing ceremonies. Such activities are called *nyadran*.[22]

Applying Geertz's theory, Cheng Ho's well provides a set of symbols which trigger within its believers moods and motivation to worship. They are convinced that Cheng Ho is a saint who can grant their wishes. Thus we will find many letters from worshippers of this well with prayers and wishes addressed to Cheng Ho. Applying Durkheim's approach, the conviction that Cheng Ho's holy cave has supernatural powers has become a paramount belief creating attachment to this temple.

There is also another Islamic element of the first temple distinguishing it from the others: the *bedug*[23], used as a part of certain ceremonies in the first temple. In Indonesia[24], the *muezzin*[25] strikes the *bedug* before *azan*. Besides, in Buddhism and Taoism, there are no rituals which involve a *bedug*. Both the size and the form of the *bedug* in the first temple are very similar to a *bedug* in mosques. It is only the red color[26] of the *bedug* which differentiates it from Indonesian Muslims' *bedug*.

Also Buddhist influences can be seen in the first shrine: a large bell whose sound is used for helping one focus one's mind during prayers, rituals, meditation, or ceremonies; and 8 *Pak Shien*[27] surrounding Cheng Ho's statue. Even Taoist symbols can be found in the first temple, for instance an even number of big candles in the court of the first pantheon as the embodiment of *Yin* and *Yang*.[28]

The evidence above supports my argument that syncretism between *abangan*, Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism has generated unique beliefs and practices in the first temple.

Islamic and *Abangan* Influences in the Second Pantheon

Unlike the first temple which functions as a religious place only for worshipping Cheng Ho's well as his "supernatural" inheritance, the second pantheon is built for the community, who expects to receive "blessings" and a "better



The Sam Po Kong temple's version of a *bedug* (photo by author)

life" from Mbah Juru Mudi's grave. Not only is his "spirit" believed to be present, his body is also buried here.

Such religious practice is rooted in Javanese *abangan*: its adherents usually visit prominent people's graves on special days (such as *Jumat Kliwon* or *Muharram*) to perform mystical rituals.[29] Nur Syam has noted that usually people select to worship graves of persons believed to possess "supernatural force", such as Mbah Modin Asyari's grave in Tuban. For every such individual's grave, there is a janitor guarding it and who is intimately familiar with the deceased's biography and guides visitors to it.[30]

Like in this Javanese *abangan* custom, there is a janitor who always takes care of the grave of Mbah Juru Mudi. Visitors, both Chinese and Javanese, usually worship his grave, wishing that he would grant their prayers. Sometimes they also meditate beside that grave; in this regard, note the tall tree near the grave.[31] The title *mbah* originates from Javanese. It is reserved for older people with "special abilities".[32] So far however, I could not find any sources describing any supernatural powers of Mbah Juru Mudi. In my research I only found that he was a Chinese Muslim, and the form of his gravestone is quite typical of Islam.

Another piece of evidence for Javanese *abangan* influences on this second shrine is the existence of two Javanese guardian statues which would "protect" both the pantheon and the grave of Mbah Juru Mudi. Usually, such "bodyguards" are placed only in ancient Javanese buildings



The gravestone of Mbah Juru Mudi (photo by author)



The sacred tree beside the grave of Mbah Juru Mudi, serving as a meditation place (photo by author)

(like the Sultan's palace) and some Hindu temples[33] decorated with Javanese ornaments (e.g. the Javanese puppet named *Wayang*). Yet, the Javanese statues in the second shrine are unique since they are surrounded by Chinese decoration, for instance Chinese characters, pictures of Chinese gods, and red color.

Rituals of worshipping the graves of Mbah Juru Mudi are certainly worth scrutinizing under the frameworks of both Geertz's and Durkheim's theories. For Geertz, conviction will produce mood and motivation which will move its followers to pray and meditate in this temple. Through Durkheim's idea of "society as the sacred", we can see that the belief that Mbah Juru Mudi is an extraordinary person has united the feelings of both Javanese *abangan* and Chinese followers in this shrine.

The Combination of Taoism and Javanese *Abangan* Belief in the Third Temple

The third shrine is the most interesting one compared to the other two, because it is devoid of human icons of worship. It belongs to the cult of Dewa Bumi. This means that it engages the *abstract transcendent*. This deity can be re-

garded as an influence from Javanese *abangan*, that is *danjang*.[34] Geertz in his detailed work *Religion of Java*[35] describes *danjang* as a guardian spirit that assists and protects people; thus every village possesses one *danjang*. Javanese belief of *danjang* aside, Dewa Bumi is said to safeguard people living around him from evil omens and bad spirits.

However, the conception of a "guardian spirit" in the third shrine differs from that found in *abangan* in several respects. First, *danjang* are usually believed to be "spirits of actual historic figures now deceased".[36] Dewa Bumi however does not represent any real person of significance: he originated from a Chinese god (and has Chinese names: Hok Tek Ching Shin, Fu Te Cheng Sen, Ta Pe Kong, and others).[37] Next, *danjang* believers are required to do *slametan*[38], whereas Dewa Bumi worshippers are only required to pray to him. Finally, *danjang* does not need other guardian spirits, while Dewa Bumi is accompanied by two other deities to protect his temple, namely Dewa Bulan (the god of the moon) and Dewa Matahari (the god of the sun). In other words, I believe that Dewa Bumi is the combination of Javanese *abangan* and Taoism since Dewa Bulan and Dewa Matahari refer to Yin and Yang energy.

Within the framework of Geertz's theory, religious insignia in the third temple provoke mood and motivation to pray to Dewa Bumi; afterwards, this activity will create the belief by the Dewa Bumi sect that this deity, with assistance of Dewa Bulan and Dewa Matahari (Yin and Yang), is their protector. If religion in this pantheon is analyzed under Durkheim's theory, one might draw the conclusion that faith in Dewa Bumi has bound followers to this temple. Syncretism plays a role in shaping ideas of Dewa Bumi in this third pantheon, although it is not inspired by a human being.



The third temple, where Dewa Bumi is worshipped. Two big statues in the temple, labeled as Dewa Bulan and Dewa Matahari, symbolize Yin and Yang in Taoism. (photo by author)

Politics of Translation: Buddhism and Taoism *à la* Indonesia

When I asked the janitor about the role of Cheng Ho, Mbah Juru Mudi, and Dewa Bumi concerning the paradigm of Durkheim's communal feelings in all three pantheons of the Sam Po Kong temple, he answered that the transcendent entities found here are media towards only one god (*gusti*). I find this notion of monotheism very interesting because, in fact, Buddhism and Taoism do not worship a god. They are often described as *philosophies of life* which provide rules to create harmony with human beings, nature, and the universe.

I then noticed that this idea of "one god" arises from the translation of the term *agama* in Indonesian, when reading Sita Hidayah's article which tries to deconstruct that word. She reveals that *agama* has become the "politicization of religion", which determines the concept of citizenship in Indonesia. That is, only those who belong to a "legitimate religion"[39] can "exist" in the social life and political sphere. Regarding the syncretism in Sam Po Kong's temple, the recognition of only one god not only stands for assimilation between Chinese culture and beliefs (Taoism, Buddhism) and Javanese tradition (*abangan*) and religion (Islam) in Semarang, but also is a means for hegemonic power of monotheistic religions in Indonesia. Hidayah terms this "the king's outfit", i.e. *agama* has reinforced major religions' teachings.[40]

Rosalind Shaw and Charles Steward support this argument by contending that some findings about the "invention of culture" uncover the strong political contingency within syncretism and hybridization. Such reconstruction (of culture) can be regarded as "colonial representations and Western modernist forms of

consciousness in general".[41] It means that the conception of ethical monotheism as one of the precepts of syncretism in Sam Po Kong's temple is the embodiment of the old colonial idea that "modern religions" are supposed to be monotheistic. Otherwise they would be excluded from the commonly accepted world religions and categorized as "alien indigenous beliefs" instead. The consequence of being regarded as an indigenous belief (*kepercayaan*) – Hidayah also spoke of this – is to be marginalized by the state. Therefore, for me, this monotheistic belief is a sort of strategy to obtain the state's recognition.

Concluding Remarks

In sum, the birth of different rituals in the Sam Po Kong shrine is a product of integration of Islam, *abangan*, Buddhism, and Taoism, a form of syncretism or hybridity. The dynamics of social interaction, especially between Chinese and Javanese people, have rendered this possible.

However, the existence of monotheism in this particular example of syncretism raises questions, due to the absence of such a notion in the original tenets of Buddhism and Taoism. Such a belief seems to stem from the term *agama* imposed by the state, which demands every official religion in Indonesia to have faith in "one god".

My observations and analysis of syncretistic phenomena in this temple employed Geertz's and Durkheim's functionalist theories to investigate the roles of religious rituals, beliefs, and activities in each of the three pantheons. In this paper I also consider the Indonesian political background – how "religion" is defined – to illustrate the hegemony of monotheistic religions, which have created a monotheism-centric perception of things.[42]

ENDNOTES

1 In the view of other Muslims, adherents of Javanese *abangan* have committed apostasy and idolatry, which are rigidly forbidden by the Qur'an. Clifford Geertz in his *Religion of Java* (pp. 126-130) made a distinction between *abangan* (*agama Jawi*) and *agama Islam santri* (students of Islam as taught in traditional Islamic boarding schools). These two groups differ in Islamic doctrine, social organization, and community (*umma*). Clifford Geertz: *The Religion of Java*; The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

2 Rosalind Shaw and Charles Steward define this as "the formation of new cultural forms from bits and pieces of cultural practice of diverse origins" (p. 10) in their *Introduction: problematizing syncretism* of: Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (eds.): *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The politics of religious synthesis*; Routledge, 1994.

3 Translated as *agama* in Indonesian.

4 The janitor of the Sam Po Kong temple more often uses the word *Gusti* than the word *Tuhan*. The former is the Javanese translation of the word "God", whereas the latter is its Indonesian translation. *Abangan* people often use the word *Gusti*. Muslim missionaries in Java (such as the Wali Songo, the "Nine Saints") usually add the word Allah after *Gusti* to remind the local villagers that their god is Allah. The preference for the word *Gusti* by Sam Po Kong's janitor shows that he has been influenced by *abangan*.

5 Nora C. Buckley: *The Extraordinary Voyages of Admiral Cheng Ho*; History Today 25 (7), 1975; p. 462.

6 This information was given by the guide of the Sam Po Kong temple.

7 Buckley, 1975; p. 464.

8 This information is taken from writings on sculptures in the Sam Po Kong shrines. These sculptures cite sources from *The Documentary Records of the Ming Dynasty*, chapter 71; *The History of Far East*; and *The History of Lou Dong Liu Jia Gan Tian Fei Palace*.

9 This evidence can also be found on the sculptures. In 1415, Cheng Ho and his troops arrived in Aceh (Sumendala). At that time, the King of Aceh was assassinated by King Nakur from Batak. Afterwards, as Prince Zainal Abidin was too young to take revenge, the Queen of Aceh declared that the person who could kill King Nakur could marry her and be the next king. A fisherman did just that and led Aceh together with the Queen. When Zainal Abidin grew up, he staged a *coup d'état* against his stepfather. Iskandar, his step brother, could not accept that and started a revolt. The resulting civil war was ended with the help of Cheng Ho.

10 Buckley, 1975; p. 467.

11 For example, King Hulumosi (of what is now Iran) bestowed him a *kylin* (giraffe). This information is found on the sculptures.

12 Kong Yuanzhi: *Muslim Tionghoa Cheng Ho: Misteri Perjalanan Muhibah di Nusantara*; Jakarta: Pustaka Populer Obor, 2007; pp. 152-156.

13 There is neither detailed historical explanation nor a biography of this person. According to Sudiyono, the janitor who guards the second temple of Sam Po Kong, dedicated to Mbah Juru Mudi, this person is a Muslim individual and different from General Cheng Ho: His real name is Wang Cin Lung, and he worked in the crew of Cheng Ho's ship. I do not know why the Chinese people in Semarang chose to worship him rather than other Chinese Muslim troops led by Cheng Ho. Another difficulty is the absence of data on the number of Cheng Ho's Chinese soldiers at the time they arrived in Semarang. The term *juru mudi* means "helmsman".

14 Jin Bun is the son of a Chinese princess (name unknown), the fourth wife of King Brawijaya. Muljana (cited below) elaborates that according to the story in *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Princess Champa, the third wife of King Brawijaya, felt jealous of that Chinese princess. Thus, King Brawijaya gave the Chinese Princess, who was pregnant at that time, to Arya Damar as a present. Thus Arya Damar became the stepfather of Jin Bun. He also had a stepbrother named Kin San. Later, both of them learned Islam from Sunan Ampel. Finally, Jin Bun (*aka* Raden Patah) ruled Demak, the first Islamic kingdom/territory in Java, the third one in *Nusantara* (now Indonesia), and the fourth one in Southeast Asia. Its capital city was Demak, with Semarang as its port city.

15 Slamet Muljana: *Runtuhnya Kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan Timbulnya Negara-Negara Islam di Nusantara*; LKiS Yogyakarta, 2005; pp. 90-97, 193-194.

16 This is based on explanations from the guide of the Sam Po Kong temple.

17 This information was obtained from Sudiyono (see above) in October 2009. It was difficult to interview the people praying in the three temples. The only way to collect data from each temple's adherents would be to do the respective religious or mystical worship, which I could not for personal reasons.

18 Daniel L. Pals: *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996; pp. 113-114.

19 Clifford Geertz: *The Interpretation of Cultures*; New York: Basic Books, 1973; p. 90.

20 Pals, 1996; pp. 244-246.

21 Before performing the five prayers, every Muslim is obliged to purify oneself via *wudlu* (ablution) with clean water. If there is no water, one can use clean dust.

22 Nur Syam: *Islam Pesisir*; LKiS Yogyakarta, 2005; pp. 132-133.

23 It takes the form of a large drum suspended horizontally at the mosque to summon the faithful to prayer.

24 I do not know whether other Muslim countries use the *bedug* in mosques.

25 A person who recites the call to prayer (*azan*).

26 In China, the red color signifies good luck.

27 Statues of the Sea Goddess (Nora Buckley mentions them as Tien Fei 天妃, which implies a Buddhist deity). Before and after his oceanic expedition, Cheng Ho always honored Tien Fei because "she was believed to have power to rescue anyone in danger of drowning, as she wandered in a red dress above the sea" (Buckley, 1975; p. 464). This was a Chinese tradition.

28 Sudiyono explained that there are three "couples" of those big candles (that is, there are 6 candles total). Just like *Yin* and *Yang*, everything in this nature must come in pairs or have an opposite partner to keep balance and harmony: man and woman, night and day, evil and the good, etc.

29 In Islam, visiting graves (*ziarah*) is permissible to pray to God so that God will forgive the sins of the dead people. Yet, *abangan* followers have turned this Islamic tenet into apostasy, idolatry, and heresy by asking for blessings from the deceased. As this tradition has broken the strict Islamic principle of Oneness of God, many Indonesian Muslim scholars, particularly from Muhammadiyah, forbid this.

30 Syam; pp. 104-105, 112.

31 Sometimes Javanese *abangan* adherents prefer to meditate under a certain tall tree because it is believed to be the "living place" of ghosts and spirits. This is based on my observation of mystical rituals in several graveyards in Surabaya, East Java.

32 Syam; p. 103.

33 Most mystical teachings of Javanese *abangan* are influenced by Hindu conviction and rituals, since in the past, Nusantara was ruled by many Hindu-based kingdoms before the emergence of Muslim leaders and *Wali Songo*; see: Koentjaraningrat: *Javanese Culture*; Oxford University Press, 1985; pp. 37-44.

34 The janitor himself said that *Dewa Bumi* is a *danjang*.

35 Geertz, 1960; p. 26.

36 *Ibid*; p. 26.

37 This information was given by the guide of Sam Po Kong's temple, in a discussion with the author in October 2009.

38 Geertz (1960; p. 82) gave detailed descriptions of *slametan* as a sacralization process during rituals of "village cleansing". Each family in the village must contribute food, and the head of the family is compelled to attend *slametan*.

39 Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism. Then, through TAP MPR No. 2 (1960), the Indonesian state – as affirmed by Hidayah (cited below; p. 8) – declared that only "religions" which have a god, a holy book, and world recognition are recognized by the state. Usually, the requirement to have "a god" is associated with rules to have *one* god. Such monotheism occurred only in Islam and Christianity as the dominant religions in Indonesia. Hence, Indonesia has "Indonesian versions" of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism which have a "one god" principle.

40 Sita Hidayah: *How the world would have to be if there is no "Agama" in Indonesia*; Gadjah Mada University, master's thesis, 2008; p. 23.

41 Stewart and Shaw, 1994; p. 22.

42 Other sources consulted:

Interviews with the guide and the janitor of the Sam Po Kong temple.

Sculptures at the Sam Po Kong temple.

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